

Message Text

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S E C R E T BANGKOK 18615

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, TH

SUBJECT: CONSULTATIONS ON FUTURE MILITARY FORCE LEVELS IN THAILAND

REF: STATE 259379

1. IN CONSIDERING TIMING OF INITIATION ON DIALOGUE WITH RTG ON FUTURE FORCE LEVELS, KEY POINT IS NEED TO BEGIN PROCESS BEFORE ANY US UNILATERAL DISCLOSURES ARE MADE. WE ANTICIPATE THAT, POSSIBLY AS EARLY AS JANUARY, SECDEF OR OTHER US OFFICIALS MAY FEEL IT NECESSARY REFER TO FORCE CUTS IN APPEARANCES BEFORE CONGRESS, POSTURE STATEMENT, AND THE LIKE. IT WILL BE ESSENTIAL THAT IN DOING SO, THEY BE ABLE TO SAY THAT WE ARE CONSULTING WITH RTG IN CONTEXT OF SOUTHEAST ASIA SECURITY SITUATION. THIS IS A MAJOR REASON FOR OUR URGING DECISIONS, OR AT LEAST PARTIAL DECISIONS, THAT WILL ENABLE US TO APPROACH THAI IN DECEMBER. IN ADDITION, FOREIGN MINISTER CHARUNPHAN, STATED IN A BANGKOK PRESS CONFERENCE ON OCTOBER 12, FOLLOWING HIS RETURN FROM MEETING WITH SECRETARY OF STATE IN NEW YORK ON OCTOBER 1, QUOTE I BROUGHT UP AND WE DISCUSSED THE QUESTION OF THE WITHDRAWAL

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OF AMERICAN FORCES. ...BOTH SIDES SAID THAT AFTER

THE END OF THE PRESENT YEAR AND WHEN WITHDRAWALS
FIXED HAVE BEEN CARRIED OUT, THE SITUATION WILL
BE REVIEWED AND CONSIDERED AGAIN. END QUOTE
(BANGKOK 16478)

2. IT HAS BEEN AND REMAINS OUR VIEW THAT SERIOUS
SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSION, INCLUDING SUCH KEY QUESTIONS
AS REENTRY RIGHTS, WILL NOT BE POSSIBLE WITH THE
THAI UNTIL AFTER THE ELECTIONS AT THE END OF JANUARY.
WE BELIEVE THE THAI THEMSELVES PROBABLY RECOGNIZE
THIS, BUT THEY DO, FOR THE RECORD, WISH TO SHOW
THE THAI PUBLIC THAT CONSULTATION WILL NOT BE ENDED
UPON TERMINATION OF CURRENT DRAWDOWN PHASE DECEMBER 31.
THIS SERVES BOTH OUR INTEREST AND THAT OF RTG.

3. IT MUST BE BORNE IN MIND THAT THE ANNOUNCEMENT
OF CONSULTATIONS CONCERNING CUTS IN FORCE LEVELS WILL
NOT BE SIMULTANEOUS WITH THE CUTS THEMSELVES. CONSULTA-
TIONS WE HAVE IN MIND WILL BE AS GENERAL AS POSSIBLE
IN NATURE AND WILL BE PROSPECTIVE, DEALING WITH
CUTS TO COME OVER A PERIOD OF TIME, PREFERABLY
CALENDAR 1975. INITIALLY, WE PROPOSE OBTAINING
THAI AGREEMENT TO THE ISSUANCE OF A STATEMENT
ALONG THESE GENERAL LINES: QUOTE THE ROYAL THAI
GOVERNMENT IS CONTINUING DISCUSSIONS WITH THE
US EMBASSY REGARDING US FORCE LEVELS IN THAILAND
DURING 1975. DEPENDING UPON THE SITUATION IN
INDOCHINA, IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT DURING THE
COURSE OF OUR CONSULTATIONS A SIGNIFICANT REDUCTION
CAN BE MUTUALLY AGREED UPON. END QUOTE. WE WILL
NEED, OF COURSE, AT LEAST SOME INDICATION OF USG
POSITION IN ORDER TO OPEN EVEN THIS GENERAL KIND
OF DIALOGUE.

4. THIS QUESTION IS SEPARATE FROM MATTER OF
POSSIBLE NEED FOR DRAWDOWNS IN PRE-ELECTORAL PERIOD,
WHICH WE HAVE DEALT WITH IN OTHER MESSAGES.
KINTNER

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